

THE SERI

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on a string around his neck, which he got from his father. It is a two inch length of cane, with a wooden stopper, containing a white powder of stone (?). A little of this powder put into fresh water, brings dew; into salt water, rain. 778 789

Similarly, Chico Romero wears on his neck a tiny spool-shaped object of wood, scarcely 2 cm. long, with notched ends. When he dies, this will burst; or rather, it seems that a larger object of the same shape, which another man keeps, will burst with thunder.

To get luck, a man paints a "cross" on his forehead, breast, and "belly" and goes to sleep. Then a dream comes in which he gets what he is thinking of. Sometimes the dream comes true; sometimes not. Some dreams are lies. 787

The soul (*alma*), he'e'sax, is all over the body and is noiseless. It is "nearly the same as blood": when the blood is lost, the soul goes. Some say that when the Seri die they are reborn in the north as Cocopa. 774 775

There seem to be no special beliefs or practises about twins. Antiso'ma (= Montezuma?) is the size of a child, has a beard, a golden staff, white clothes inside and black outside. He lives in a cave. Once he tried to take a young man away with him in order to dress him nicely. Later the young man's relatives went with him to find Antiso'ma again, but could not. 845 776

Songs

Toad was a woman who had only a breech-clout and wanted a cotton shirt. She said she would give herself to a man for one. 533

Coyote was a Seri once.

Pinacate (dung-beetle?) wanted a bride and was jealous about her.

Colaprieta, the black-bellied ant, also was a man and wanted to marry the hok'ctim ant. He was making a house of grass for her. She was afraid of him, and her relatives took her away.

Games

The four-tube-hiding game is played with canes open at one end. These canes are: blackened all over, old man; unpainted, old woman; blackened at one end, boy; blackened in the middle, girl. The boy and girl are made by slitting off slivers on two sides. The names serve as designations only; the differences between the tubes do not enter into the game. The player with the tubes turns around, puts a piece of twig into one, fills them all with sand, and throws them before his opponent, who tries to empty the twig from the third tube he selects. If so, he wins the canes, that is, the right to play. If the twig is in the first tube emptied, he loses 10; if in the second, 6; if in the fourth, 4. Counters are little natural shell disks. 524

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so all the other flies could see and also come to this dead thing."

- 787 [198] A few weeks ago, Antonio Herrera had a very vivid dream. He dreamed that he was hunting in the mountains for deer and came across a cave. (These volcanic mountains are pitted with caves.) He went into the cave and saw all kinds of things dear to the heart of a Seri---plenty of rifles, lots of cartridges, knives, *manta* (unbleached cotton), necklaces, red bandannas, blue overalls, *plata*, or silver, and many other things.

[794] When he awoke he sought his father Manuel Encinas, who is a medicine man and interpreter of dreams, to explain his dream to him. The price demanded by Manuel was six *tiras*---or 30-30 cartridges, a very high price, according to Seri standard. The explanation was this:

It was true that the cave was there and all the things in it just as seen and described by Antonio, but in order to find it he would have to fast nine days and go without water that length of time also, in the heat of summer. Then the way would appear to reach the cave. So far, Antonio has not attempted the fast.

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396 I witnessed the operation of making a certain kind of pitch or tar which the Seris use to make the seams in their canoes or boats tight. The women pound up the dried pulp next to the outside skin of a dead *pitahalla* cactus (organ cactus). This is very dry and brown in color and the pieces are pounded up to a dry powder with a wash or shore rock in a dried deer hide. This is placed in a *batello*, or flat basket, and manipulated so that the coarse pieces come to the top and are scraped off and thrown away. The fine powder is then put in a five gallon can and some porpoise or sea-lion oil or horse oil is poured on it and stirred into a thick gummy mass. When thoroughly mixed it is put over the fire, in an olla, to boil and continually stirred for an hour or two until it is the consistency and has the appearance of coal tar. While being worked it is kept heated and applied to seams inside and outside the boat. It hardens just like tar and answers the same purpose..

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869 Since the corn, which had kept this band of Seris in food, disappeared two days before we came, and they had barely kept going on seeds and a few fish, and they all had decided to leave camp with us in the morning---the women walking and the men and some children in boats---it was necessary to supply them with some food to take them to the hunting grounds of the *cahuas*, or sea turtles, and land them on the Island. The *cahuas* would furnish them meat---their favorite and national food, and the shores would supply them with clams, oysters, crabs and other sea food.

- [641] 123 So the whole band was called around our camp and each family was furnished with two cups of corn, two of beans, some green coffee and a cup of cube sugar. For the first time our camp was free of Indians, and we ate and went to bed in peace.

The amenities of civilization were laid aside and forgotten in